United Nations S/2016/146

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 12 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit the report of the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Defence in preparation for the 6th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and held in Luanda on 10 February 2016 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated to all members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Albert **Shingiro**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations

16-02139 (E) 180216

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Annex to the letter dated 12 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report of the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Defence in preparation for the 6th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

Luanda, Angola, 10 February 2016

The meeting of the ICGLR Committee of Ministers of Defence was held in Luanda, Angola, on 10 February 2016.

The meeting was held to assess the security and humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Republic of South Sudan.

The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Defence or their representatives from the following member States: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Sudan, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Zambia.

Also in attendance were the Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces of ICGLR member States, the ICGLR Executive Secretary, the Chair of the Regional Coordinating Committee of Intelligence Services, the Commander of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) and the Coordinator of the Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre.

1. Opening session

The meeting was officially opened by the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, who welcomed his fellow Ministers of Defence and all the delegates to Luanda and urged them to help in the efforts to resolve the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Burundi. He noted that the resolution of these conflicts is essential to establishing an environment of peace, stability and development in those countries and in the region and to enable the region to harness its vast potential for the betterment of the people.

He reminded the participants about their previous decisions and those taken by the ICGLR Summits of Heads of State and Government and emphasized the importance of working hard towards their full implementation.

He reiterated the Republic of Angola's continued unwavering commitment in doing its utmost to advance the strategic objectives of peace, security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region.

The meeting was also addressed by Ntumba Luaba, the ICGLR Executive Secretary, who noted the positive developments registered so far in the region while emphasizing the ongoing security and humanitarian challenges in the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of South Sudan.

He further expressed appreciation to the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Angola and, through him, to the people and Government of Angola for its continued leadership in the quest for sustained peace, security, stability and development in the region and for the warm hospitality and excellent facilities provided for the meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Defence adopted the following agenda:

i. Consideration of the report of the meeting of Chiefs of Defence Staff/ Forces

ii. Briefing by the Minister of Defence of DRC

iii. Briefing by the Minister of Defence of South Sudan

iv. Briefing by the Minister of Defence of Burundi

v. Briefing by the Minister of Defence of the Central African Republic

vi. Briefing by the Minister of Defence of the Sudan

vii. Preparation and adoption of the final report

3. Adoption of the report of the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces

The report of the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces was adopted by the representatives of all member States except the Republic of Rwanda, who walked out of the meeting before the adoption of the report in protest against the inclusion of allegations of aggression against Burundi by Rwanda in the report.

4. Briefing by the Ministers of Defence

The Committee of Ministers of Defence of ICGLR received comprehensive briefings on the security and humanitarian situation in the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan.

5. Recommendations

Having considered the report of the meeting of the ICGLR Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces and having received detailed briefings and contributions from various ministers, and in the spirit of cooperation in the promotion of peace and security in the region, the Committee of ICGLR Ministers of Defence made the following recommendations:

On DRC

i. *Commended the Government of DRC for its capability in conducting operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces*;

ii. *Welcomed the signing of the new technical arrangement with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic*

of the Congo as decided by the ICGLR Summit of 18 May 2015 to eradicate FDLR and other negative forces in the eastern DRC;

iii. *Noted that, with regard to the repatriation of the remaining ex-combatants of M23 in Rwanda and Uganda since the Summit of 18 May 2015, only 13 were repatriated in December 2015, and recommended sanctions to the leaders of ex-combatants of M23 who are blocking repatriation.*

On the Republic of South Sudan

i. *Welcomed the work of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the recent developments towards the realization of the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity;*

ii. *Called for the quick arrival to Juba of Riek Machar to hasten the final formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity;*

iii. *Appealed to the international community to extend humanitarian assistance to the Government of South Sudan to facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced people and to address the worsening humanitarian conditions in some parts of the country.*

On the Republic of Burundi

i. *Called upon all stakeholders to commit to the inter-Burundian dialogue as the best means to consolidate peace and unity for the people of Burundi;*

ii. *Recommended that a committee of the ICGLR Ministers of Defence visit Burundi and Rwanda together with EJVM and that the latter conduct a verification mission in both countries on the allegations.*

On the Central African Republic

i. *Called upon ICGLR member States to urgently expedite the nomination of military experts, as directed by the Summit in Luanda, to assess the needs for the reconstruction of the armed forces of the Central African Republic;*

ii. *Recommended that the ICGLR executive secretariat develop clear terms of reference for the military experts mission to the Central African Republic;*

iii. *Recommended that the ICGLR military experts mission should start on 10 March 2016 and last for five days;*

iv. *Recommended that the Chair of the Regional Inter-ministerial Committee facilitate the implementation of the ICGLR Summit decision on convening a joint ICGLR/Economic Community of Central African States summit;*

v. *Called upon the United Nations to lift the arms embargo on the Central African Republic and appealed to all ICGLR member States to support this call, and further called upon African members of the United Nations Security Council to help to advance this important call*;

vi. *Appealed to the international community to assist the CAR Government to address the humanitarian situation*;

vii. *Highlighted the need to neutralize the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and noted the resurgent trade in ivory by LRA*;

viii. *Noted the holding of the first round and forthcoming rerun of elections and encouraged all the stakeholders to remain on the path of democracy*.

On the Republic of Sudan

i. *The Committee of Ministers of Defence, having listened to the briefing from the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Sudan about the negative effects of sanctions by the United States of America on the economy and people of the Sudan, recommended that the sanctions be lifted*;

ii. *The Committee of Ministers of Defence condemned the activities of negative forces in the Republic of Sudan, namely JEM, SLM/M, SLM/A and SPLM/North, and called for their neutralization*.

On EJVM

i. *The meeting adopted the report of EJVM with amendments*;

ii. *Recommended an expert working group composed of all member States to redefine the terms of reference for EJVM in line with the current security situation*;

iii. *Recommended that the EJVM budget be consolidated into the member States' assessed annual contributions to the ICGLR secretariat for the sake of better budget management and accountability*;

iv. *Called for the member States to continue honouring their obligations and to do so as soon as possible; in this regard, the Republic of Angola pledged to pay EJVM an advance of US$ 180,000 as part of its annual contribution*;

v. *Recommended that the Chair of the ICGLR Chiefs of Defence Staff conduct a field visit to the headquarters of EJVM in Goma*.

The Committee of Ministers of Defence commended the Government and the people of Angola for the warm hospitality and excellent facilities that enabled the meeting to be successful.

Done in Luanda, 10 February 2016

(*Signed*) Gen. João Manuel **Gonçalves Lourenço**
Minister of National Defence
Republic of Angola

(*Signed*) Emmanuel **Ntahomvukiye**
Minister of National Defence and
Former Combatants
Republic of Burundi

(*Signed*) Joseph **Bidoumi**
Minister of National Defence
Central African Republic

(*Signed*) Gen. Charles Richard **Mondio**
Minister of National Defence
Republic of Congo

(*Signed*) Crispin **Atama Tabe Mogodi**
Minister of National Defence,
Former Combatants and Reinsertion
Democratic Republic of Congo

(*Signed*) Raychelle **Omamo**
Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Defence
Republic of Kenya

Gen. James **Kabarebe**
Minister of Defence
Republic of Rwanda

(*Signed*) 1st Lt. Gen. Awad **Mohamed Ahmad ibn Auof**
Minister of Defence
Republic of the Sudan

(*Signed*) Kuol Manyang **Juuk**
Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs
Republic of South Sudan

(*Signed*) Hussein A. **Mwinyi** (MP)
Minister of Defence and National Service
United Republic of Tanzania

(*Signed*) C. W. C. B. **Kiyonga** (MP)
Minister of Defence
Republic of Uganda

(*Signed*) Richwell **Siamunene** (MP)
Minister of Defence
Republic of Zambia

United Nations S/2016/147

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 February 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 14 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to our previous letters regarding Turkey's grave and repeated violations of the sovereignty and territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, I wish to inform you that, on 13 February 2016, the forces of the Turkish regime committed a series of bare-faced assaults on the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Beginning in the afternoon hours of 13 February 2016, Turkish heavy artillery positioned within Turkish territory bombarded Syrian territory, targeting the locations of Syrian Kurdish civilians and Syrian Arab Army positions. In an act of direct support for armed terrorist groups, Turkish heavy artillery bombarded the Syrian villages of Mar'anaz, Malikiyah, Minnagh, Ayn Daqnah and Bazibagh, all of which have civilian populations. That action was a response to the military victories of the Syrian Arab Army in the northern countryside of Aleppo governorate. Its purpose was to raise the flagging morale of the armed terrorist groups.

On the same day, 12 pick-up trucks mounted with DShK and 14.5 mm machine guns crossed the border crossing of Bab al-Salamah from Turkish territory into Syrian territory along with some 100 armed men, some of whom are believed to be Turkish forces and mercenaries. Ammunition and weapons continue to be channelled through the Bab al-Salamah crossing into the Syrian district of I'zaz.

Concomitantly with those acts of aggression, the Turkish Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, openly acknowledged this bare-faced intervention in Syrian affairs. He stated that the Turkish regime would continue to provide various forms of support and funding to such terrorist groups as the so-called Nusrah Front, the Levant Front, Ahrar al-Sham and other terrorist organizations associated with Al-Qaida. Those statements amount to a formal, premeditated and emphatic admission that Turkey is violating the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council. Annexed hereto are some examples of infringements of the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic committed by the Turkish Government in 2015.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the irresponsible conduct of the Turkish regime, which recently thwarted the Geneva Conference and is now endeavouring to ensure that any future Geneva conference is doomed from the outset.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns Turkey's repeated crimes and acts of aggression against the Syrian people and the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Such actions are a bare-faced violation of Syrian sovereignty. They also flagrantly contravene the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of international law and all of the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council. The Syrian Government reiterates that it reserves its legitimate right to respond to Turkey's repeated crimes, violations and acts of aggression and to demand compensation for all of the resulting damages.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again emphasizes that the Security Council must fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and curb the Turkish regime's crimes against the Syrian people and its repeated violations of Syrian territory. The Syrian Government calls on the Security Council to prevail on the regimes of State sponsors of terrorism, including the Turkish regime, to enforce the Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism. The Council must also bring an end to those regimes' ties with armed terrorist groups including Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups associated with Al-Qaida, and hold the regimes accountable for their untrammelled support for such groups.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the identical letters dated 14 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

List of Turkish violations and acts of aggression against the territory and sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic

- On 26 December 2015, armed and motorized Turkish forces infiltrated the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and attacked the villages of Latifiyah, Kharab Kishk and Tall Jahan in Hasakah governorate, all of which have civilian populations. They also attacked the residential neighbourhood of Hilal, in Qamishli city, and built cement walls.

- On 25 December, armed and motorized Turkish forces infiltrated the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic near the villages of Bustan, Qalqiliyah and Tall Ziwan in Hasakah governorate. The hostile forces took up positions on Tall al-Bustan, where they installed barbed wire and barricades on Syrian territory. They deployed with guns and artillery and attacked Syrian civilians in the village.

- On 22 December, Turkish forces took control of some 500 dunams of Syrian agricultural land in the area near the village of Hayr Jamus and the Hamdush farm in the Harim district of Aleppo governorate. Turkish military forces deployed over a distance of 25 kilometres between the districts of Harim and Salqin, at one end, and the districts of Darkush and Khan al-Jawz, at the other. The Turkish forces also transported advanced weapons and ammunition from Qatar and Saudi Arabia to armed terrorist groups — specifically the so-called Ahrar al-Sham, Ansar al-Sham and Zanki battalions — located in Aleppo governorate, the northern countryside of Ladhiqiyah governorate and the districts of Salqin and Harim in Idlib governorate.

- On 19 December, the Turkish authorities installed fortifications and operations rooms equipped with advanced listening devices on Jabal al-Aqra', on Syrian territory. They also established an observation post with advanced monitoring devices on the citadel of Shalaf village in order to spy on the movements of the Syrian Army, the Syrian air force and its ally the Russian air force, and give detailed accounts of their movements to the armed terrorist groups.

- On 27 November, Turkish military forces launched three mortar shells at the village of Bi'nin in Ladhiqiyah governorate, injuring several civilians.

- On 26 November, armed and motorized Turkish forces infiltrated the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and attacked the villages of Aradah, Tall Diyab, Ibrahimiyah, Aziziyah and Asadiyah in the Ra's al-Ayn district of Hasakah governorate, terrorizing the inhabitants. The civilian Muhammad Ahmad al-Yasin of Asadiyah village was killed, and several other civilians sustained various injuries. The hostile Turkish forces carried out engineering and construction work. They built a cement wall 2 kilometres long and 6 metres tall on Syrian territory, in the area opposite Aradah village, and another wall 500 metres long.

- On 29 January 2016, Turkish military forces opened machine gun fire in the direction of Syrian territory, targeting Syrian Arab Army forces at the positions of Syrtel, Jabal Atirah and Kanisah village. They killed two Syrian Army soldiers and injured others.
- On 18 January, Turkish military forces fired three artillery shells at Syrian Arab Army forces around the Kassab area.

United Nations S/2016/148

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 15 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to my letter circulated on 3 February 2016 (S/2016/108), regarding the repeated violations of Turkish airspace by Russian Federation military aircraft, and to the letter by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation, which contains groundless allegations, circulated on 4 February 2016 (S/2016/116) in response to my letter, I would like to expound on a couple of important issues.

First and foremost, it should be underlined once again that all Turkish airspace violations committed by Russia, which constitute solid cases of rampant disrespect for Turkish sovereignty, have been verified by technical data obtained by Turkish air defence systems, as well as by NATO. It is not possible to delete or invalidate such data, which is already on record.

Following the first two violations of 3 and 4 October 2015, a two-star general from the Russian Armed Forces visited Ankara with a delegation to give explanations. The Turkish military authorities informed the Russian delegation about possible serious consequences of such vast violations, suggested practical measures to avoid further similar incidents and provided them with the technical details of the violations. Furthermore, following the 24 November 2015 incident, the Turkish military authorities also informed the Russian Military Attaché in Ankara as to the details of airspace violations that took place on 22 December 2015 and 29 January 2016 and repeatedly warned him of possible serious consequences of such unlawful acts.

Turkey is resolved to protect its airspace and made this crystal clear to the Russian side on numerous occasions. The disregard of Turkey's sovereign right to defend its airspace according to international law is the sole reason for the downing of the Russian military aircraft which was violating the Turkish airspace, despite our repeated calls for it to divert its course. As such, the responsibility for the incident lies with no one other than the Russian Federation itself.

I am attaching a detailed radar image and maps regarding the Turkish airspace violation that occurred on 29 January 2016 (see annexes).

I also would like to bring to your kind attention digital voice recordings of repeated calls in English and Russian in radio transmissions to SU-34 via GUARD channel to divert its course and not to intrude the Turkish air space, which can be reached from the following link: http://turkuno.dt.mfa.gov.tr/ShowAnnouncement.aspx?ID=250368.

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The Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to NATO has also been informed by NATO about the airspace violation and the records of the incident.

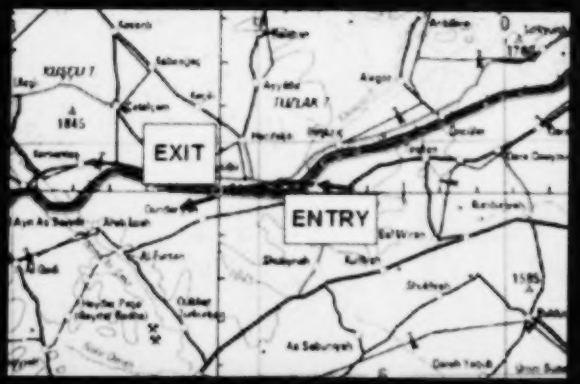
Regarding the baseless allegations about the Turkish policy towards Syria, let me reiterate that Turkey, since the beginning of the crisis, has stood by the Syrian people in their fight for a political change that meets their legitimate aspirations and has been at the forefront of all the efforts that would lead to a democratic, non-sectarian and multicultural Syria while maintaining its territorial integrity and unity. In this regard, Turkey, which has been a safe refuge for over 2.5 million Syrians, has taken all possible measures to alleviate the plight of the Syrian people despite the tremendous burden it entails. We invite the Russian authorities to stop distorting the facts and to engage genuinely with the international community in the fight against DEASH and not against the civilian people in Syria.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Y. Halit **Çevik**
Permanent Representative

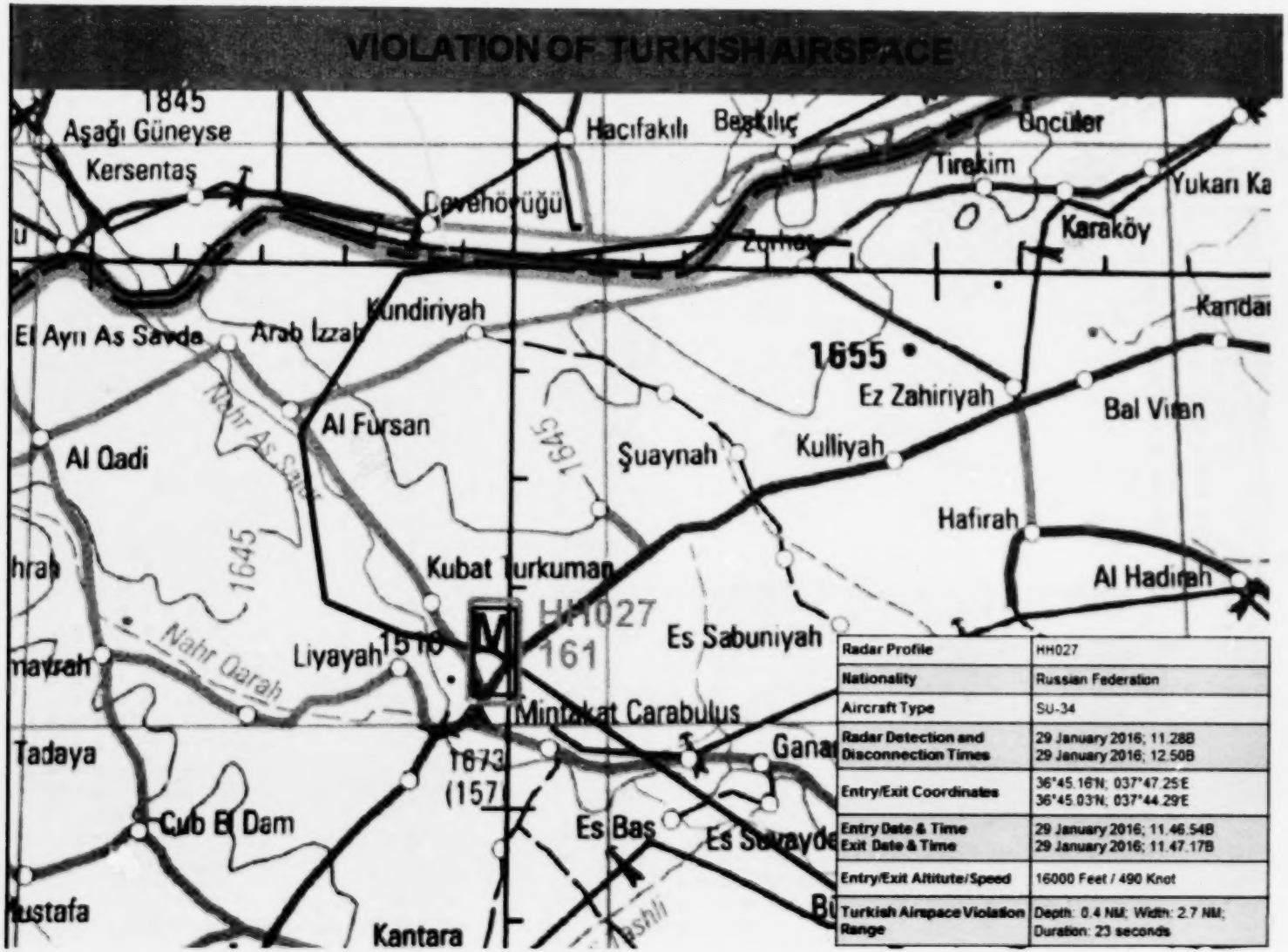
Annex I to the letter dated 15 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

VIOLATION OF TURKISH AIRSPACE



Radar Profile	HH027
Nationality	Russian Federation
Aircraft Type	SU-34
Radar Detection and Disconnection Times	29 January 2016; 11.28Z 29 January 2016; 12.50Z
Entry/Exit Coordinates	36°45.16'N; 037°47.25'E 36°45.03'N; 037°44.29'E
Entry Date & Time **Exit Date & Time**	29 January 2016; 11.46.54Z 29 January 2016; 11.47.17Z
Entry/Exit Altitute/Speed	16000 Feet / 490 Knot
Turkish Airspace Violation Range	Depth: 0.4 NM; Width: 2.7 NM; Duration: 23 seconds

Annex II to the letter dated 15 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council



Annex III to the letter dated 15 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

United Nations S/2016/149

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 16 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to our previous letters, of which the most recent was dated 14 February 2016, I should like to draw your attention to alarming information about continued Turkish violations and attacks against the sovereignty and territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Turkish regime forces recently seized more than 2,000 dunums of land inside Syrian territory along the length of the border with the Harim area as far as the last border village, called Tulul, in the Salqin district. That is an area 30 m wide and 20 km long, which they have cleared of trees.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns Turkey's repeated crimes and acts of aggression against the Syrian people and the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Such actions are a bare-faced violation of Syrian sovereignty. They also flagrantly contravene the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law. The Syrian Government reiterates that it reserves its legitimate right to respond to Turkey's repeated crimes, violations and acts of aggression and to demand compensation for all of the resulting damages.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again emphasizes that the Security Council must fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by compelling the Turkish regime to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, all of which affirm the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and by taking the necessary measures to put an end to the Turkish regime's repeated crimes and attacks against Syrian territory, which are described above.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-02460 (E) 190216 190216

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United Nations S/2016/150

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 16 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government and with reference to the statement made by Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, during the Security Council ministerial open debate on respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for the maintenance of international peace and security, held on 15 February 2016, in which some unfounded and unacceptable claims were raised against the Islamic Republic of Iran, I have the honour to state the following:

1. My delegation categorically rejects the baseless accusations that the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates levelled against my Government. Instead of accusing others of destabilizing the region, the United Arab Emirates needs to reconsider and stop its short-sighted, exclusionist and sectarian approach across the Islamic world that has and continues to inspire and help the most destructive forces in the Middle East. It is abundantly clear who are supporting the destabilizing elements that lead Al-Qaeda and Deash and fill their rank and file.

2. "Security for all" has been the principal pillar of Iran's security strategy in the Persian Gulf, which aims to maintain peace, security and stability in the region. Iran's foreign policy accords priority to enhancing stability in the region and promoting constructive engagement across the globe. We are determined to actively contribute to peace in the region in the face of the increasing threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Iran highly respects principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and, at the same time, believes that the legitimate rights of peoples should be respected.

3. On the unilateral claim by the United Arab Emirates over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its consistent and principled position that it does not recognize the existence of any such dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates; the three islands have been and continue to be an inseparable part of Iranian territory and, therefore, any claim to the contrary is categorically rejected. Nonetheless, and to show its utmost respect for the principle of good neighbourliness, Iran has always expressed its readiness to talk with the United Arab Emirates bilaterally with a view to removing any misunderstanding that may exist on the part of the United Arab Emirates over Abu Musa Island.

4. "Persian Gulf" is the only true geographical designation for the body of water lying between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, which has been used from the dawn of history. As the institutional memory of all renowned cartographic agencies testifies, this sea area has always been identified as "Persian Gulf". In this context, the policy of the United Nations in standardization of geographical names, and its policy and practice in emphasizing the name "Persian Gulf" as the only geographical designation applicable to this body of water, are noteworthy and should therefore be respected by all.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated to all members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/70/736–S/2016/151

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 44
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 16 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 15 February 2016, addressed to you by Mr. Mehmet Dânâ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Y. Halit **Çevik**
Permanent Representative

16-02331 (E) 220216

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Annex to the letter dated 16 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 8 February 2016 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/70/721-S/2016/124), which, yet again, contains false assertions similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish, once again, to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent authority to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace.

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its isolation policy that has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Civil Aviation Department, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or control.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus as "illegal", is in complete contravention to international law, as well as the call made in the report to the Security Council of Mr. Kofi Annan, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437, para. 93) in which he clearly states "I would hope they (members of the Security Council) can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)".

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation

Organization, providing safe and swift navigation of aircraft landing at or taking off from Ercan Airport and using airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the increasing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2015 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at nearly 3,500,000 (compared to 3,250,000 in 2014), while a 7 per cent increase is expected in 2016. Moreover, in 2015, nearly 26,000 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure, and around 210,000 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace, to which a 7 per cent increase is again expected in 2016. In that respect, it must be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

At a time when the comprehensive settlement negotiations are progressing swiftly in a results-oriented atmosphere, I deem it necessary to stress the need to fully channel all our efforts towards achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus conflict in line with the established United Nations parameters and the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, which envisage a new partnership on the basis of the political equality of the two peoples of the island within the framework of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with two constituent states of equal status. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot administration should once again be reminded that its counterpart is and has always been the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric, which is not reflective of the joint vision and cooperation expressed by the leaders of both communities on the island since the resumption of the settlement talks in May 2015. As the two future partners in the island of Cyprus, we should never lose sight of the fact that the solution of the Cyprus problem will comprehensively deal with all pending issues between the two sides and thus focus all our efforts towards the ultimate goal of settlement.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that, as the Turkish Cypriot side, we are committed to maintaining our constructive and positive stance within the context of your good offices mission in Cyprus and encourage our Greek Cypriot neighbours to follow a similar path.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Nations S/2016/152

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 17 February 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

The present letter is submitted pursuant to paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), in which the Council requested me to report within 60 days on the implementation of the resolution. The information contained herein is based on information available to United Nations bodies and agencies from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and from open sources.

Negotiations on a political transition process

In paragraph 1 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council reconfirmed its endorsement of the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria (Geneva communiqué) of 30 June 2012, endorsed the two Vienna statements of 30 October and 14 November 2015 in pursuit of the full implementation of the communiqué, as the basis for a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition in order to end the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and stressed that the Syrian people would decide the future of the Syrian Arab Republic. In that context, in paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Council requested me, through my Special Envoy for Syria, to convene representatives of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposition to engage in formal negotiations on a political transition process. In paragraph 4, the Council expressed its support for a Syrian-led political process facilitated by the United Nations that would, within a target of six months, establish credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance and set a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution.

Following the adoption of resolution 2254 (2015) on 18 December 2015, my Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, carried out intensive consultations throughout January 2016 with members of the International Syria Support Group and with representatives of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposition. From 5 to 9 January, he visited Riyadh, Ankara, Damascus and Tehran to that effect.

On 26 January, my Special Envoy sent invitations to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the High Negotiations Commission (the opposition), requesting both to form 15-member delegations to participate in United Nations-facilitated negotiations on a political transition process in order to resolve the conflict and lay the foundations for a lasting settlement. Ten representatives of the meetings held in Moscow and Cairo were invited individually to join the Special Envoy in Geneva as he began the process of negotiations.

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The Syrian participants were invited to engage initially in a proximity format and on the basis of the agenda put forward in resolution 2254 (2015). In his letter to all participants, my Special Envoy stated that, as the mediator, he would determine the modalities and workplan to implement the agenda, in consultation with the participants.

On 29 January, with the arrival in Geneva of the government delegation, my Special Envoy launched the talks. The first official meeting with the delegation of the High Negotiations Commission was held on 1 February. A second meeting with the government delegation was held on 2 February. Separate informal meetings were also held with the two delegations on 3 February.

In its meetings with my Special Envoy, the government delegation made it clear that the Government wished to see the comprehensive implementation of the Security Council resolution, not selective implementation such as beginning with humanitarian issues. It also sought clarifications on procedural matters regarding the conduct of and participation in the proximity talks in Geneva, especially in relation to the composition of the opposition delegation. While repeating that it had come to Geneva to discuss any matter relating to the implementation of the resolution, the government delegation insisted, more than once and forcefully, on first receiving those clarifications; until then it considered the negotiations to be in a preparatory phase.

The delegation of the High Negotiations Commission, in its first meeting with my Special Envoy, voiced demands relating to lifting sieges, ceasing aerial bombardment, ensuring humanitarian access and releasing detainees. Those demands, it insisted, were obligations outlined in paragraphs 12 and 13 of resolution 2254 (2015) and should be implemented by the relevant parties without delay before engaging in any political discussion.

On 5 February, my Special Envoy formally met the group of opposition figures associated with the meetings held in Moscow and Cairo. On the same day, and as part of his efforts to ensure the adequate participation of women in the negotiations in line with relevant Security Council resolutions, he met the women's advisory board nominated by Syrian women's organizations for the talks and 17 representatives of Syrian civil society organizations.

In the light of the positions articulated by the parties and the lack of progress in implementing possible humanitarian initiatives aimed at positively affecting the lives of the Syrian people, my Special Envoy announced a recess in the talks on 5 February. The environment for negotiations was also affected by increased aerial bombings and military activities on the ground.

Against that backdrop, the International Syria Support Group met in Munich, Germany, on 11 and 12 February and reaffirmed the importance of all sides engaging in negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations as soon as possible in order to advance a political transition in strict compliance with resolution 2254 (2015).

Nationwide ceasefire

In paragraph 5 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council expressed its support for a nationwide ceasefire to come into effect as soon as the representatives of the Government and the opposition had begun initial steps towards a political transition under the auspices of the United Nations. In paragraph 6, it requested the

United Nations to lead the effort to determine the modalities and requirements for a ceasefire and urged Member States to support and accelerate all efforts to achieve a ceasefire. In paragraph 7, it requested me to report on options for a ceasefire monitoring, verification and reporting mechanism and encouraged Member States to provide assistance to support such a mechanism.

As indicated in the resolution, there is also a close link between a ceasefire and a parallel political process. Confidence in the political process would increase the prospects for a ceasefire; in turn, a reduction in violence would help to provide a more conducive environment for negotiations. Interim de-escalation measures could also contribute to creating such an environment in the lead-up to a ceasefire. In that context, the International Syria Support Group agreed in Munich that a nationwide cessation of hostilities must be urgently implemented. The Support Group stated that the cessation should apply to any party currently engaged in military or paramilitary hostilities against any parties other than Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front or other groups designated as terrorist organizations by the Security Council. It also established a ceasefire task force under the auspices of the United Nations, co-chaired by the Russian Federation and the United States of America, to develop, within one week, modalities for a nationwide cessation of hostilities. It further agreed that the cessation of hostilities would begin in one week, after confirmation by the Government and the opposition and following consultations in the Syrian Arab Republic.

At the time of writing, the task force was just beginning to develop the modalities for the cessation of hostilities, including structures for reporting and assessing non-compliance. At the same time, pursuant to paragraph 7 of the resolution, my Special Envoy had previously reported to the Security Council on 18 January on possible modalities for a ceasefire and options for its monitoring, verification and reporting. Those modalities and options are described below, but should not be seen as prejudging the work of the task force.

Once in place, ceasefire monitoring and verification are likely to require at least two levels of in-country structures: physical monitoring and verification at the local level and an oversight body covering the entire country. There could also be an intermediate provincial level.

All the levels should include a dispute resolution function to address and de-escalate breaches of the ceasefire or any precursor de-escalation arrangements, proactively reduce tensions and build confidence. On the ground, monitoring could be complemented by independent information resources, such as satellite imagery and other data sources.

The operating environment in the Syrian Arab Republic is likely to remain highly fragmented, volatile and militarized for the foreseeable future. As such, a flexible approach to international oversight of ceasefire arrangements is envisaged. In particular, it would be extremely difficult under the current conditions to envisage any deployment of United Nations monitors to conduct physical monitoring and observation tasks on the ground. Achieving any form of verification of actions taken by the parties would also be almost impossible in the current context. Options for enabling an effective international contribution to credible ceasefire monitoring, verification and reporting are, however, something towards which we must all work.

Bearing in mind those constraints, the spectrum of monitoring options can be broadly categorized as monitoring by local Syrian parties (the Government, non-State armed opposition groups and civil society), physical monitoring by local parties with indirect or remote international support and assistance, direct physical monitoring by international parties (the International Syria Support Group or other States) and direct physical monitoring by the United Nations. It is likely that multiple options could be implemented simultaneously, depending on the security environment and the nature of the conflict in the various parts of the country. As the ceasefire evolves, there could also be a transition between options.

Security conditions and political acceptance will determine the presence and nature of any monitoring by international actors, ranging from indirect or remote support to a direct role in physical monitoring at the local level. Given the operating environment on the ground, the Security Council will need to understand and accept the risks involved in mandating any international monitoring to be undertaken at the local level.

Determining terrorist groups

In paragraph 8 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council reiterated its call in resolution 2249 (2015) for Member States to prevent and suppress terrorist acts by ISIL, the Nusrah Front and all other entities associated therewith and to eradicate the safe haven that they had established in significant parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 9, the Council welcomed the efforts of the Government of Jordan to develop a common understanding within the International Syria Support Group of individuals and groups for possible determination as terrorists and stated that it would expeditiously consider the recommendation of the Support Group for the purpose of determining terrorist groups.

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), Member States are to introduce a set of legislative and institutional counter-terrorism measures to prevent terrorists from committing crimes or to bring them to justice. The measures may be used by any group of Member States to counter activities that they jointly consider to be of a terrorist nature. They must be taken in compliance with international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law.

If the International Syria Support Group were to agree on a list of groups and individuals to be potentially designated as terrorists, that list would need to be processed in accordance with international norms and standards and in compliance with international law in order to help to unite global counter-terrorism efforts and enhance cooperation among all Member States in combating terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Confidence-building measures

In paragraph 10 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council emphasized the need for all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic to take confidence-building measures to contribute to the viability of a political process and a lasting ceasefire and called upon all States to use their influence to advance them. In paragraph 11, the Council requested me to report on options for further confidence-building measures.

It should be noted that, in the resolution, the Security Council demanded that the parties to the Syrian conflict should allow humanitarian access, in particular to besieged areas; release arbitrarily detained persons, in particular women and children; cease attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such, including attacks against medical facilities and personnel, and any indiscriminate use of weapons, including through shelling and aerial bombardment; and comply with their obligations under international law.

Many of the steps are pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. The negotiation of their immediate implementation could, however, help to advance the political process and a ceasefire. Their inclusion as potential confidence-building measures does not negate or detract from their legal character. In that light, the term "further confidence-building measures" is taken to mean those measures that are not listed in the resolution and that could contribute to the viability of the political process and a lasting ceasefire.

As the political negotiations begin, my Special Envoy will aim to introduce confidence-building measures as one of the streams of the talks. Potential measures that the parties to the negotiations could agree to take in the short term include:

(a) Publicly undertaking to respect the political status of the participants in the talks, including committing themselves to not issuing or to revoking arrest warrants for them and their immediate families;

(b) Committing themselves to further enabling access to and freedom of movement for civilians in areas besieged by their forces and undertaking to ensure humanitarian access to those areas, including lifting all restrictions on the presence of medical and surgical supplies in humanitarian convoys;

(c) Conducting prisoner exchanges and addressing the issue of missing persons and, as a first step, releasing information on detainees and missing persons;

(d) Reciprocally agreeing to end the use of indiscriminate weapons and the indiscriminate use of weapons such as barrel bombs, cluster munitions, hell cannons and land mines in and around civilian areas;

(e) Committing themselves to halting attacks on civilian objects and infrastructure, including medical and education facilities and water and electricity networks, and generally taking adequate precautions so as not to damage or destroy civilian objects;

(f) Agreeing to provide access, in the territory that they control, to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, or the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-Finding Mission, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic in order to demonstrate their will to see the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2235 (2015) and 2253 (2015) and Human Rights Council resolution S-17/1.

In the light of the agreement reached by the International Syria Support Group in Munich on 11 February on humanitarian access and a cessation of hostilities, some of the confidence-building measures need to be implemented before the resumption of negotiations.

Humanitarian and human rights obligations

In paragraph 12 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council called upon the Syrian parties to immediately allow humanitarian agencies access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic and to release any arbitrarily detained persons, called upon States members of the International Syria Support Group to use their influence immediately to those ends and demanded the full implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and any other applicable resolutions.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to deliver assistance to millions of people in need from within the Syrian Arab Republic and across borders, pursuant to resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). For example, in 2015, the United Nations and partners delivered, on average and per month, food assistance for 6 million people, safe drinking water for more than 8 million people, non-food items for in excess of 4.8 million people and health interventions for some 14 million people. Non-governmental organizations, including pro-opposition organizations, and the Government continued to provide basic services in various parts of the country.

Since the adoption of resolution 2254 (2015), the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the 13.5 million people in need in the Syrian Arab Republic has remained extremely challenging in many areas as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines and deliberate restrictions by the parties.

Access to the 4.6 million people in besieged or hard-to-reach areas remains of critical concern. The situation is particularly grave for the 486,700 people in besieged areas, of whom some 274,200 are besieged by the Government, 200,000 by ISIL and 12,500 by non-State armed groups and the Nusrah Front. In 2015, the United Nations was able to deliver humanitarian assistance to only around 1 per cent of people in besieged areas and to fewer than 10 per cent of people in hard-to-reach areas.

Since the adoption of resolution 2254 (2015), intensified conflict in several governorates has further hindered the effective delivery of assistance and access to essential services. For example, humanitarian operations have been severely disrupted in Aleppo governorate since early February 2016 as a result of the recent intensification of ground fighting and air strikes by the Government and the Russian Federation in the northern part of the governorate. Elsewhere, heavy fighting between the Syrian parties and continued air strikes by the Government and its allies in Rif Dimashq, Homs, Hama, Ladhiqiyah and Dar'a governorates have disrupted humanitarian activities and affected the delivery of life-saving assistance.

The demands of the Security Council notwithstanding, at the time of writing all parties to the conflict were continuing to restrict humanitarian access to people in need. In particular, the current administrative procedures put in place by the Government continue to severely constrain and delay the delivery of assistance by United Nations agencies and its partners across conflict lines. While figures for 2016 are not yet available, in 2015 just in excess of 10 per cent of the 113 requests for inter-agency convoys to cross-line locations resulted in the delivery of life-saving assistance. Almost 75 per cent of the requests were not answered by the Government. The cumulative impact on the ground of the restrictions is tangible: in 2013, the United Nations reached some 2.9 million people through the inter-agency convoy mechanism, but only 620,000 in 2015.

In 2016, the United Nations and partners have to date conducted inter-agency convoys to the besieged areas of Madayah, Zabadani, Fu'ah and Kafraya, as well as to Wa'r in Homs. While requests to send convoys to several other locations have been granted, the vast majority are pending the approval of the Syrian authorities. Reports also continue to be received that non-State armed opposition groups and listed terrorist groups, especially ISIL, are continuing to restrict or impede the efficient delivery of assistance in areas under their control.

Access to basic medicines and medical care continues to be limited by insecurity and restrictions imposed by parties to the conflict. At the time of writing, the World Health Organization had submitted some 15 requests to the Government to send medicines and medical supplies for 2.5 million people in besieged and hard-to-reach locations in nine governorates that were pending approval. Furthermore, the Government continues to remove medical items from United Nations convoys. For example, the security forces removed medical kits from an inter-agency convoy that delivered assistance to some 40,000 people in Wa'r on 4 February. Meanwhile, humanitarian access for health sector actors in ISIL-controlled areas remains restricted.

In a welcome development, the International Syria Support Group agreed in Munich that sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance should begin within days of 11 February to Dayr al-Zawr, Fu'ah and Kafraya and the besieged areas of Rif Dimashq, Madayah, Mu'addamiyah and Kafr Batna by air and land for as long as humanitarian needs persisted. This is intended as a first step towards sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, based on a plan to be submitted by the United Nations following consultations with the Support Group humanitarian task force. The task force began its work on 12 February with the participation of all Support Group members and the United Nations. It was agreed that the United Nations would resubmit requests for access to six besieged areas, referring to the statement adopted by the Support Group in Munich, for an intended delivery date of 17 February, and that the task force would meet the following week to assess progress.

With regard to detainees, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reported on 3 February that hundreds of eyewitness accounts and documentary evidence strongly suggested that tens of thousands of people were being detained by the Government at any one time (the Government has denied the Commission and other international human rights monitoring organizations direct access to the country). It also found a countrywide pattern since March 2011 in which civilians, mainly males above 15 years of age, were being arbitrarily arrested and detained by the security and armed forces or by pro-Government militias and subjected to massive and systematized violence, torture and death in captivity. On 26 January, the United Nations received another periodic note verbale from the Government in which it was indicated that 305 detainees who had signed written pledges not to take up arms had been released. The United Nations is not in a position to confirm the information.

The Commission also found that, while incidents of killing, torture and related violations against detainees had occurred in areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front, it was difficult to document an institutionalized pattern of mass arrests and arbitrary detention, torture and killing of detained civilians in areas controlled by most of those groups.

The Commission further found that ISIL was continuing to illegally hold a large, unknown number of detainees for extended periods, subjecting many to torture and routinely conducting summary executions. Journalists and activists, as well as civilians deemed to violate regulations or decrees imposed by ISIL, were found to have been subjected to unlawful deprivation of liberty, torture and ill treatment.

In paragraph 13 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council demanded that all parties to the conflict should immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects and any indiscriminate use of weapons, welcomed the commitment by the International Syria Support Group to press the parties in that regard and demanded that all parties should immediately comply with their obligations under international law.

Since the adoption of resolution 2254 (2015), attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, markets and essential services, have continued with total impunity, depriving civilians of basic and essential services and further increasing humanitarian needs throughout the country. The attacks included indiscriminate and disproportionate aerial bombings and ground attacks by government forces, supported by allies, and indiscriminate shelling by non-State armed opposition groups and designated terrorist groups that continued to kill, injure and displace civilians.

Attacks on schools have continued unabated. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, some 35 schools in the Syrian Arab Republic were attacked in 2015, with 1 in 4 closed, damaged or destroyed, and attacks have continued into 2016. The frequency of attacks on hospitals and medical facilities is also continuing to increase. According to Physicians for Human Rights, 2015 was the worst year on record for attacks on medical facilities — with at least 112 attacks — and the deaths of 107 medical personnel. From March 2011 to November 2015, Physicians for Human Rights documented 336 attacks on medical facilities, 305 of which were conducted by the Government or allied forces. In addition, the United Nations and health partners have received reports, which are being verified, of 13 attacks on medical facilities in January 2016.

The parties to the conflict also continue to target and disrupt water, electricity and other essential networks. Water and electricity to the cities of Aleppo and Damascus were cut off by non-State armed opposition groups and listed terrorist groups over the course of 2015, affecting millions of people. Most recently, on 17 January 2016, ISIL cut off the water supply to Aleppo governorate from the Khafsah water pumping station on the Euphrates River, which used to supply water to 3.5 million people per day. Throughout the country, public spaces such as markets also continue to be targeted by air strikes, causing large-scale civilian casualties and disrupting access to food and other basic items. For example, on 20 December, just two days after the adoption of resolution 2254 (2015), six air strikes reportedly hit locations in the city of Idlib, including the local courthouse, a residential neighbourhood and a market, reportedly leaving 95 civilians dead and at least 170 injured.

Safe and voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons

In paragraph 14 of resolution 2254 (2015), the Security Council underscored the critical need to build conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their home areas, in accordance with international

law. This was reaffirmed by the International Syria Support Group in its statement adopted in Munich.

Currently, the situation is not conducive to the active facilitation or promotion of returns owing to the prevailing security situation and limited humanitarian access to many areas of origin. An unknown number of Syrian internally displaced persons and refugees have returned spontaneously, at their own initiative, especially over the past year. Spontaneous returns are often not prompted by measurable security improvements in areas of origin, instead being caused by other factors, such as shortfalls in assistance or protection needs, impediments to being reunited with family members owing to admission restrictions put in place by host countries or a lack of access to livelihoods in host countries.

Similarly, returns take place in difficult conditions, often as a result of inability on the part of internally displaced persons to sustain themselves and their families in the locations to which they have been displaced. Sporadic returns have been reported, especially in areas in which the previously contested security situation has stabilized or where there are local agreements or other arrangements.

Humanitarian agencies seek to assist those who have returned to their areas of origin, but significant challenges remain. Humanitarian access remains severely impaired by a wide range of factors, including insecurity and shifting conflict lines, the targeting of humanitarian workers and facilities, the closure of key access routes, burdensome administrative procedures, a complex regulatory environment for cross-border activities, the forced relocation of civilians and restrictions on freedom of movement.

The conference held in London on 4 February to support the Syrian Arab Republic and the region was a genuine and significant success and marks a change in the humanitarian response of the international community to the crisis. It succeeded in raising an unprecedented $11.3 billion for those affected between 2016 and 2020. Without a political solution to the conflict, however, increased humanitarian assistance and policy measures to provide longer-term support for refugees and host countries will not of themselves create conditions conducive to voluntary return in conditions of safety and dignity.

Conclusion

In the present letter, I have reported on the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015), including the tasks assigned to the United Nations therein. Clear tasks were also given, however, to the Syrian parties, the International Syria Support Group, all Member States and the Security Council itself.

In particular, the Security Council called upon the Syrian parties to take confidence-building measures to advance the political process and ceasefire and also demanded that they should meet their fundamental humanitarian and human rights obligations. Moreover, it called upon all States to use their influence with the parties and specifically upon members of the International Syria Support Group to immediately press the parties towards those ends.

In his briefing to the Security Council on 18 January, my Special Envoy specifically identified sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all besieged areas as essential to creating a credible foundation for the intra-Syrian talks that he was about to convene. Without that in place and in the light of the offensive in

Aleppo and continued aerial bombardment, it was extremely difficult for him to continue with the preparatory phase of the talks in Geneva beyond 5 February.

The agreement reached by the International Syria Support Group on 11 February represents a precious opportunity for the early resumption of the talks on a more credible basis. With Support Group task forces established on a cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access, the resumed talks should concentrate on advancing a political transition pursuant to the Geneva communiqué by negotiating the establishment of credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance and setting a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution within six months. I also take note, in particular, that Support Group members pledged to do all that they could to facilitate rapid progress in the negotiations.

The statement adopted by the International Syria Support Group in Munich at long last goes beyond mere calls for humanitarian access. There is now an agreed set of actions and an immediate timeline to achieve the life-or-death goal of humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas and ultimately throughout the country. Until we can attain that goal and make a difference in their daily lives on the ground, Syrians will rightly continue to be sceptical about the international community and the credibility of negotiations to end the devastating conflict. The United Nations will do its part to ensure that the international community collectively meets this test through the humanitarian access task force, which began its work on 12 February. The Organization has also already begun preparations for humanitarian deliveries to the locations identified in the statement.

The nationwide cessation of hostilities agreed to in Munich is a further welcome development and has the potential to produce progress on two other key obligations under resolution 2254 (2015): the immediate cessation of attacks against civilians and civilian objects and any indiscriminate use of weapons. Those principles should become core elements of the nationwide cessation of hostilities. The United Nations also stands ready to convene the ceasefire task force with its Co-Chairs, the Russian Federation and the United States. At the same time, and as we make progress on those issues, we must also not lose sight of the fact that in resolution 2254 (2015) the Security Council called for the release of any arbitrarily detained persons, including in particular women and children.

In addition to political, humanitarian and ceasefire aspects, resolution 2254 (2015) contains calls upon Member States to combat ISIL, the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups designated by the Security Council. The proposed cessation of hostilities will not apply to those groups. I hope that progress in defining the modalities for implementing a reduction in violence in the coming days will also enable greater military cooperation in combating the terrorist organizations listed by the Council.

I call upon members of the Security Council and the International Syria Support Group to faithfully and comprehensively implement resolution 2254 (2015) and follow through on the commitments that they made in the statements adopted in Vienna and Munich to use their influence over the Syrian parties in that respect.

The recent surge in military activity in Aleppo governorate further underscores the need for the members of the International Syria Support Group to live up to their commitment made in Munich to exercise influence for an immediate and significant reduction in violence leading to a cessation of the hostilities. The latest shelling and

bombardments have destroyed many more Syrian lives, in addition to schools and hospitals, and have created large numbers of internally displaced persons, many of whom will become refugees. The escalated military activity by several parties and the threats to resort to the further use of force risk derailing efforts to find a sustainable political solution and the ability of my Special Envoy to credibly reconvene the talks.

Rarely are the international community and the Security Council presented with as stark a choice as the one that they now have before them. On the one hand, the Council can proceed to implement its own resolution 2254 (2015) and associated agreements on humanitarian access to the most vulnerable of Syrians, de-escalate the violence, combat terrorism and resume negotiations on the political roots of the Syrian conflict. On the other, the Syrian parties and their supporters can continue to pursue the bankrupt logic of a military victory, which has already led to the deaths of more than 250,000 Syrians, the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time and the creation of safe havens for terrorist organizations such as ISIL and the Nusrah Front.

I repeat my call upon the Security Council to refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court. Those responsible must be held accountable for the appalling crimes that continue to be committed.

The United Nations will do all it can to further the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015), but will require genuine, committed and sustained backing from the Security Council and the States members of the International Syria Support Group to be successful. It must not be forgotten that it is, first and foremost, the responsibility of the Syrian parties to end the conflict in line with the principles laid out in resolution 2254 (2015), the statements adopted by the International Syria Support Group and the Geneva communiqué.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

United Nations S/2016/153

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2016

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Identical letters dated 17 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to draw your attention to the outrageous threats made by the head of Hezbollah, an internationally designated terrorist organization.

Yesterday, in an open public statement, Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, issued an imminent threat to the citizens of northern Israel. He threatened a catastrophic attack on Haifa's ammonia storage tanks, which would "lead to the death of tens of thousands of residents and 800,000 Israelis would be affected".

Nasrallah declared that "this would be exactly as a nuclear bomb and we can say that Lebanon today has a nuclear bomb ... we are able with only a few rockets to target gas containers in Haifa and kill tens of thousands" of innocent Israeli civilians.

This threat of the mass murder of innocents comes from the head of an Iranian proxy terror organization which is currently assisting the Assad regime to slaughter hundreds of thousands in Syria, including by conducting a deliberate policy of starving people to death.

The gravity of this threat is magnified by Hezbollah's ongoing militarization of the towns and villages of southern Lebanon, in clear violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Every day, new evidence emerges that Hezbollah is using southern Lebanon as a military encampment and is embedding its military infrastructure in civilian areas. Hezbollah has stationed thousands of missiles and rockets in the heart of southern Lebanon's civilian population.

The goal of this build-up is clear. This is a terror organization which has repeatedly targeted Israeli civilians from within the Lebanese civilian population — a double war crime. Hezbollah is actively working to expand its capabilities to carry out such indiscriminate attacks, while openly declaring its intention to continue to do so. Nasrallah himself boasted that "the resistance [Hezbollah] has missiles that can reach every place" in Israel.

Hezbollah's military build-up and murderous threats are unacceptable. When a terrorist organization publicly threatens the civilians of another country, silence is not an option.

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I call on you to publicly condemn this dangerous and aggressive statement and to demand that the Government of Lebanon live up to its commitments and fully implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2016/154

Security Council

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18 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 17 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you with reference to the letter from the Syrian regime's representative dated 4 February 2016 and multiple others from the same representative.

A foreign national, Hytham Qassap, referred to in the said letter, was arrested and duly prosecuted along with his five Turkish citizen contacts in 2013 while trying to acquire in the open market of Hatay Province six different types of chemicals, two of which were not allowed for sale without a permit.

Hytham Qassap was indicted and tried for "attempting to provide arms to terrorist organizations" and "being a member of a terrorist organization", while the said five Turkish citizens were indicted of "attempting to provide arms to terrorist organizations".

As a result of the criminal proceedings that were finalized on 29 December 2015, it was found that the suspects were not able to acquire the chemicals concerned and were hence acquitted of the charge of "attempting to provide arms to terrorist organizations". Nevertheless, Hytham Qassap has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for "being a member of a terrorist organization".

Turkey is fully committed to its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the above-mentioned case demonstrates how Turkey monitors meticulously all sorts of potential criminal acts, including the acquisition of sensitive chemical materials, and takes the necessary security, intelligence and legal measures in order to foil any attempt to breach the provisions of the Convention.

The Syrian regime, which continues its efforts to prolong its grip on power by employing all instruments of force and violence available to itself, holds a well-known record of using chemical weapons, and its accusations found in the letter in reference are a part of its campaign aimed at distracting the attention from its gross violations of international law and Security Council resolutions. The "negligence" on the part of the Syrian regime in taking measures on the capture of its chemical weapons by Daesh/ISIL, as highlighted in my letter dated 6 January 2016, on the other hand, is an example of the collaboration between the regime and Daesh/ISIL.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Y. Halit **Çevik**
Permanent Representative

16-02469 (E) 190216

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United Nations S/2016/155

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 17 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to attach herewith the press statement issued by the Arab coalition forces to restore legitimacy in Yemen on 16 February 2016.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah **Al-Mouallimi**
Permanent Representative

16-02468 (E) 190216 190216

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Annex to the letter dated 17 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Statement issued by the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen

Tuesday, 16 February 2016

Coalition forces in the port of Jazan have stopped a vessel suspected of transporting prohibited items into Yemen. The vessel had left Djibouti bound for the port of Hudaydah, which is under the control of the Houthi militias, when it was intercepted by coalition forces and taken to Jazan for inspection. The vessel that has been seized belonged to the United Nations World Food Programme and had been transporting humanitarian assistance to Yemen as part of the relief programme for the Yemeni people. However, it has become apparent that the vessel's cargo did not consist solely of items whose importation into Yemen is permissible. Certain World Food Programme staff members were responsible for bringing undeclared items onto the seized vessel. In so doing, they made deceitful use of United Nations procedures.

United Nations S/2016/156

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2016

Original: English

Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. This twenty-fourth report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 2191 (2014) and paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 2258 (2015), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on the information available to United Nations agencies on the ground, from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, other Syrian sources as well as open sources. Data from United Nations agencies on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for the period from 1 to 31 January 2016. More recent data have been included where available.

II. Major developments

A. Developments on the ground

3. Widespread conflict and high levels of violence continued throughout the Syrian Arab Republic in January. Indiscriminate and disproportionate aerial bombings and ground attacks by Government forces, supported by its allies, and indiscriminate shelling by non-State armed opposition groups and designated terrorist groups,[1] continued to kill, injure and displace civilians. The conduct of hostilities by all parties continued to be characterized by a widespread disregard for the rules of international humanitarian law and the obligation of all parties to protect civilians.

4. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented attacks by all parties to the conflict, as well as unattributed

[1] On May 2013, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusrah Front were designated as terrorist groups by the Security Council in accordance with resolution 1267 (1999). The two groups operate in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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attacks that resulted in the killing of more than 400 civilians and injuring of hundreds more during the reporting period.[2] These included air strikes and shelling with the use of artillery, barrel bombs, mortars and rockets, as well as car and suicide bombings in populated areas. Private property, civilian infrastructure, and protected structures, such as schools and hospitals, also continued to be damaged and destroyed. The ongoing hostilities also continued to displace people, with humanitarian partners reporting some 200,000 people displaced in 11 governorates during January and early February.

5. Open sources also reported on civilians killed during the reporting period. For example, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights published the death of 1,345 civilians while the Syrian Network for Human Rights published the death of 1,382 civilians. The United Nations was not able to verify these cited figures.

6. Fighting intensified throughout Aleppo governorate during January and February. Government of Syria ground offensives in northern Aleppo, backed by heavy aerial bombardment on a daily basis by Syrian and Russian air support, had reportedly resulted in some 500 civilian deaths as of 11 February, according to open sources. In addition some 61,000 people have also been displaced, mostly northwards towards Azaz and the Bab al-Salam border area. Civilian infrastructure, including several medical facilities, was also severely damaged. Humanitarian operations from Turkey to Aleppo and other governorates are continuing, but have been disrupted as a result of the ground fighting and heavy bombardment along major towns and transport corridors from Turkey towards Aleppo. While the recent fighting killed hundreds and displaced tens of thousands, the recent Government offensive also resulted in the end of the three-year encirclement of the nearly 30,000 people living in the government-controlled enclaves of Nubul and Zahra. Fighting between Government forces and its allies, non-State armed opposition groups and ISIL was also reported in Aleppo city and surrounding areas, resulting in death and injury. For example, on 16 January, according to information received by OHCHR, an airstrike hit a building used as a medical clinic in the non-State armed group controlled Sokkari neighbourhood of Aleppo city reportedly killing seven civilians, including four children. On 25 January, Government air strikes hit the town of Termanin, west of Aleppo city, allegedly killing at least 6 civilians, and injuring more than 20. Meanwhile, non-State armed opposition groups also continued their shelling of Government-controlled neighbourhoods, including Manshieh, Azizieh, and Saad Jabri, reportedly resulting in multiple civilian casualties, according to open sources. Meanwhile on 16 January, ISIL cut off the water supply to Aleppo governorate from Al Khafseh water treatment facility on the Euphrates River affecting some 2 million people.

7. Heavy fighting was reported in Damascus and Rif Dimashq governorates. Fighting between Government forces, backed by Russian air support, and non-State armed opposition groups continued in and around eastern Ghutah, accompanied by intensified aerial bombardments and shelling. Information received by OHCHR indicates that some 50 civilians were killed and hundreds injured as a result of

[2] These figures are based on incidents documented by OHCHR during the reporting period according to their human rights monitoring methodology. It is not a full representation of all incidents that may have impacted civilians during the reporting period. Despite requests, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has not granted access to its territory to either OHCHR or the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

multiple air strikes in eastern Ghutah during January. On 7 January, several air strikes were carried out on residential areas in Erbin, causing the death of at least 12 civilians, and injuring approximately 85. On 12 January, a kindergarten was hit in Deir Al-Asafier killing two civilians, including one child. Meanwhile, in western Ghutah, the main road between Daraya and Madimayet Elsham was cut off on 27 January following intensified shelling and air strikes around the two besieged towns. On 24 January, open sources reported that the southern part of Madimayet Elsham was hit by several air strikes and missiles, killing five people and injuring 26 more, and an estimated 500 families were reportedly displaced inside the city. Displacement was also recorded in Balaliyeh and Nashabieh as a result of ongoing fighting and heavy bombardment.

8. Non-State armed opposition groups also launched several attacks in Damascus and Rif Dimashq, with the city of Damascus subjected to continued shelling. According to information received by OHCHR, non-State armed opposition groups struck populated areas in the capital, killing and injuring many civilians and damaging infrastructure and residential buildings. For instance, on 6 January, nine civilians were killed and at least 36 were injured when several mortar rounds fell on al-Shaalan, Abu Rummana, Hamra and Baghdad Street.

9. In Idlib, towns controlled by non-State armed opposition groups were subjected to almost daily air strikes by the Government and its allied forces, causing widespread destruction. For example, on 10 January, 47 civilians were reportedly killed and 100 others were injured, and a number of shops destroyed, when a market in Ma'aret Nu'man was hit. On 11 January, missiles struck a primary school in Anjara, killing 10 civilians, including 9 children. On 16 January, Government aircraft struck the local council building in Fayloun, reportedly killing eight civilians and injuring a dozen more. Another attack on 28 January, which struck a number of residential buildings in Kafr Takhareem, reportedly killed at least 12 civilians and injured 20.

10. Heavy fighting was reported in northern rural parts of Homs Governorate, with Government forces launching offensives in and around Talbiseh, Rastan, and the Houle Plain, cutting off the remaining supply routes and encircling the area. Aerial strikes by Government forces resulting in civilian casualties were also reported: on 11 January, five civilians, including a child, were killed in air strikes by Government forces on Rastan. Reports indicate that the 120,000 civilians in these areas face rapidly worsening humanitarian conditions, including a severe lack of food, high prices of available goods in markets, and medical supplies.

11. Civilian casualties and injuries were also reported in Homs city as a result of attacks by listed terrorist groups. For example, on 23 January, two car bombs exploded in the Wadi al Dahab neighbourhood, injuring at least 15 civilians. According to information received by OHCHR, the Nusrah Front claimed responsibility for the attack. On 26 January, ISIL claimed responsibility for a car bomb and a suicide bombing in the Zahra neighbourhood, killing over 20 civilians and injuring 50. In Rif Dimashq, on 31 January, ISIL claimed responsibility for twin car bombs and one suicide bomber that detonated at the Sayyida Zeinab shrine which killed 45 civilians and injured dozens.

12. In Dayr al-Zawr governorate, ISIL launched a series of offensives on the besieged neighbourhoods of Joura and Qusoor in Dayr al-Zawr city, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties and damaging public and private property and

infrastructure. OHCHR also received reports that some civilians trying to flee the ISIL advance were executed by ISIL: for example, 17 male civilians were killed in Bghiliya while trying to flee an ISIL attack on 16 January. On 22 January, according to information received by OHCHR, air strikes of an unknown origin were carried out on different areas in western rural Dayr al-Zawr, including Tabiya, Albo Leil, Kharita, as well as ISIL-held areas around Dayr al-Zawr city. At least 55 civilians were allegedly killed, including 40 in Tabiya and 12 in Albo Leil. On 23 January, air strikes on Khsham, in eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr, reportedly killed at least 50 civilians.

13. Fighting continued in southern Syria during the reporting period. In Dar'a governorate, government forces seized control of Sheikh Miskine and Atman town north of Dar'a city, close to the Ramtha border crossing. OHCHR received reports of numerous civilian casualties as a result of rockets, artillery and air strikes by Government and allied forces, including on 13 January when six civilians were killed by ground and air strikes on Nawa and Dar'a city. Some 36,000 people were displaced in Dar'a as a result of the recent fighting. In Lattakia, government ground forces, with Syrian and Russian air support, made advances against non-State armed opposition groups, capturing one of the last non-State armed opposition group-held towns in Lattakia by the end of the month. On 30 January, government forces allegedly shelled the Obeen camp housing internal displaced persons in northeast Lattakia governorate, causing the death of at least one person and injuring tens of others.

14. The Russian Federation as well as the United States-led coalition forces continued to carry out air strikes in Syria throughout January according to reports received by official sources. While not providing data for the full month, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation confirmed that it had carried out more than 1,120 "combat sorties" during January, engaging 3,256 targets in the Governorates of Aleppo, Hasakeh, Raqqa, Idlib, Damascus (presumed to include Rif Damashq), Dar'a, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Homs and Lattakia. Meanwhile, the United States Central Command confirmed that at least 114 strikes were carried out by the United States-led coalition in the month of January against ISIL targets in the governorates of Aleppo, Hasakeh, Raqqa, and Dayr al-Zawr. OHCHR received numerous reports of air strikes reportedly by international actors in which civilians were killed or injured, including in Raqqa, Rif Dimashq, Dayr al-Zawr, and Idlib governorates, which killed some 200 people and injured hundreds. However, OHCHR was not able to adequately verify the origin of the reported air strikes.

15. There were developments regarding several local agreements during the reporting period. In the Qadam district of south Damascus, which had been under a local agreement since August 2014, further agreement was reached between the government and non-State armed opposition groups inside which some 3,000 civilians were enabled to return to their homes in the district. The Government of Syria is still restricting the movement of civilians inside the neighbourhood, pending clearance of possibly remaining mines or other unexploded ordinances. Local agreements in Wadi Barada, Rif Dimashq, and Al Wa'er, Homs, also continue to hold, despite reported violations of the agreement and some provisions of the agreements remaining to be implemented.

16. Despite violations to the ceasefire, the Four Towns agreement covering Zabadani, Madaya, Foah and Kafraya also continued to hold, with the United

Nations and International Committee of the Red Cross/Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivering assistance on 11, 14 and 18 January. However, follow-up medical, nutrition and food deliveries to Madaya, Foah and Kafraya have not been possible owing to disagreements among the parties to the Four Towns agreement. The parties continue to negotiate further simultaneous medical evacuations.

17. In besieged Madimayet Elsham, the local agreement broke down after Government forces closed the main road to the town late in December 2015 and shelled the areas. On 22 January, a government negotiator reportedly warned non-State armed opposition groups inside the city to surrender their weapons or the city would be evacuated and declared a military zone.

B. Human rights

18. The scale and severity of abuses and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including abductions, summary executions, and deaths in custody, remained grave during the reporting period. On 8 February, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic launched a report entitled "Out of sight, out of mind", detailing how Syrian civilians have been arbitrarily arrested, unlawfully detained, taken hostage, or kidnapped since the conflict began by all parties to the conflict. The report describes how thousands of detainees held by the Syrian Government have been beaten to death, or died as a result of injuries sustained as a result of torture. The report also details the acts of other parties to the conflict including non-State armed opposition groups, Nusrah Front and ISIL, including cases of cruel treatment, executions, torture, murder and summary executions.

19. OHCHR received reports that, on 18 and 19 January, 25 alleged members of the National Defence Forces were reportedly summarily executed by ISIL following fighting in Dayr al-Zawr governorate.

20. On 12 January, ISIL reportedly sentenced two drivers to 40 lashes and imposed an 800 Syrian Lira fine in Dayr al-Zawr city for attempting to transport civilians to areas outside ISIL control. Other reports received also indicated that ISIL has prohibited civilians from leaving areas under its control. OHCHR also received reports alleging that ISIL was forcibly moving civilians from Ramadi, Iraq, to western rural Dayr al-Zawr. The reasons behind such deportations remained unclear.

21. During the reporting period, OHCHR received reports alleging the abduction of civilians by the Nusrah Front in Idlib city. According to information received, at least 11 civilians were abducted from their homes in Idlib in January by the Nusrah Front and taken to undisclosed locations.

22. On 9 January, a Kurdish schoolteacher was taken from his home in Qamishly. The Kurdish National Council later accused the Democratic Union Party/People's Protection Unit (PYD/YPG) of abducting the teacher, whose whereabouts remained unknown.

23. On 2 January, OHCHR received information that the PYD/YPG allegedly forcibly evicted 16 civilians from their houses in Ras el Ain, north-west of Hasakeh. According to information received by OHCHR, all those evicted were ethnic Arabs. The houses were then reportedly rented or used as offices.

C. Humanitarian response

24. In January 2016, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all modalities from within the Syrian Arab Republic and across borders pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). Non-governmental organizations also continued to deliver assistance to people as in previous months. The Government of Syria continued to provide basic services to areas under its control as well as in many areas beyond its control.

United Nations agency	*Number of people assisted in January 2016*
World Food Programme (WFP)	3.6 million
World Health Organization (WHO)	657,000 treatments
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	2.05 million
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	267,000
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	112,925
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	66,000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)	290,000

25. Cross-border deliveries continued during the reporting period. As at 31 January, the United Nations and its implementing partners had sent 256 shipments from Turkey and Jordan to the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015), benefiting millions of people. The attached map provides more information on United Nations cross-border convoys. In line with resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including content, destination and number of beneficiaries.

26. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism continued its operations in Jordan and Turkey. In January, it monitored 17 United Nations humanitarian shipments consisting of 540 trucks, confirming the humanitarian nature of each, and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The Monitoring Mechanism continued to benefit from excellent cooperation with the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

27. In January and early February 2016, the following inter-agency convoys were completed, assisting over 125,000 people in need:

Date (2016)	*Destination*	*Type of assistance*
11 January	Madaya/Buqayn (Rif Dimashq); Foah and Kafraya (Idlib)	Food, medicines, medical and nutrition supplies
11 January	Al-Wa'er (Homs)*	Food, medicines, medical, nutrition and non-food items
14 January	Madaya/Buqayn (Rif Dimashq); Foah and Kafraya (Idlib)	Wheat flour, health and nutrition supplies, water and sanitation supplies and non-food items
18 January	Madaya/Buqayn, Zabadani (Rif Dimashq); Foah and Kafraya (Idlib)	Fuel (Madaya/Buqayn and Foah and Kafraya); food, wheat flour and health supplies (Zabadani)
4 February	Al-Wa'er (Homs)	Food, health, non-food items, nutrition, water and sanitation support, and education supplies. Medical supplies, including surgical items and diarrhoea kits were removed by Government security forces

* The delivery to Al-Wa'er on 11 January was the final part of a convoy requested and approved by the Syrian authorities in 2015; it was not related to a request made in 2016.

28. United Nations agencies also undertook cross-line deliveries in January. For example, WFP and partners reached 5,000 people in Zakieyh and Tiba in Rif Dimashq. UNICEF completed the rehabilitation of water pumps and other water supply infrastructure in Idlib Governorate, providing access to water to some 300,000 people. In response to the water supply being cut in Aleppo city, UNICEF scaled up its water trucking operation, supplying 5 million litres of water per day, sufficient to meet the needs of 375,000 people.

Humanitarian access

29. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need of assistance in the Syrian Arab Republic remained challenging in many areas of the country as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines, and deliberate restrictions by the parties on the movement of people and goods, including burdensome administrative procedures.

30. Access to the 4.6 million people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remained of critical concern (see attached map of current besieged and hard-to-reach locations). In 2016, 55 inter-agency convoy requests have been submitted to besieged and hard-to-reach locations, with the following status as of 15 February:

Status of inter-agency convoy requests as of 15 February	*Requests*
Approved and convoys proceeded	4
Approved in principle; awaiting facilitation letters	5
Submitted and pending approval by Government of Syrian Arab Republic	46
Total	**55**

31. Intensified conflict and worsening security conditions in several governorates hindered the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as people's access to essential services. Major supply routes from Damascus to Dar'a, Sweida and Homs remained vulnerable to insecurity due to ongoing clashes. WFP remained unable to access high-conflict areas of Rif Dimashq, rural Homs, rural Hama, and its cross-border partners continued to be unable to conduct distributions in Kafr Zeita and Kafr Nabutha subdistricts in northern rural Hama owing to insecurity. Meanwhile, the shifting conflict lines in Aleppo governorate early in February also severely disrupted humanitarian operations, particularly from Turkey into eastern Aleppo city. In Hasakeh, a large number of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices deployed in Hasakeh city and insecurity in Qamishly city has also hampered humanitarian programming.

32. Deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties also continued to prevent aid delivery. For example, WFP continued to be unable to reach people in need in ISIL-controlled areas of the country owing to the inability to work independently and to monitor activities. This affects some 720,000 people in almost all of Dayr al-Zawr and Raqqa governorates, parts of rural Aleppo and east rural Homs, as well as pockets in southern rural Hasakah and northwestern rural Hama.

33. As a result of these factors, the United Nations agencies and partners reached only 32 of the 154 hard-to-reach locations (21 per cent). Nearly half of the people in hard-to-reach areas are in ISIL-controlled areas, to where the United Nations has extremely limited access. However, in January, UNICEF delivered an additional 100 tons of water disinfectant to Raqqa, sufficient to meet the needs of the entire population for over two months, as well as aquatabs.

34. Details of assistance to people in hard-to-reach areas in January 2016 are contained below.

Sector (United Nations delivery only)	*Number of people reached in hard-to-reach areas*
Food security	238 800
Health	119 000
Non-food items	99 600
Water, sanitation and hygiene	587 900

35. Owing to security concerns, since 27 December 2015 the Nusaybin/Qamishly crossing has been temporarily closed by the Turkish authorities. No humanitarian assistance went through the crossing in January. Reports of high food prices and shortages in some essential commodities, like yeast and sugar, were received in Hasakeh governorate.

36. No major improvements in the administrative procedures required by the Syrian Government for the delivery of humanitarian assistance were reported in January. The administrative procedures in place with regard to humanitarian operations continued to delay or limit the delivery of aid by United Nations agencies and partners.

37. As of 31 January, 9 United Nations visa requests (either new visas or renewals) remained pending, all of which were within the 15 working days' limit. In

January, a total of 79 visas for United Nations staff from 10 different agencies were approved, 30 of which were new visas and 49 of which were renewals.

38. A total of 16 international non-governmental organizations are authorized to operate in the Syrian Arab Republic. They continued to face a series of administrative hurdles and restrictions that impact their ability to operate. They remain restricted in their ability to partner with national humanitarian organizations, open sub-offices, conduct missions, join inter-agency convoys and undertake independent needs assessments.

39. The number of national non-governmental organizations authorized to partner with United Nations organizations increased from 139 to 141 in January. Authorized national non-governmental organizations continue to operate under complex procedures in partnering with United Nations agencies.

Besieged areas

40. Of the 4.6 million people living in hard-to-reach areas, some 486,700 people remained besieged in the Syrian Arab Republic. This includes some 274,200 people besieged by the Government of Syria in various locations in Rif Dimashq; 6,000 people besieged by the Government of Syria and non-State armed opposition groups in Yarmouk; some 200,000 people in Dayr al-Zawr city who are besieged by ISIL; and some 12,500 people who are besieged by non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front in Foah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate.

41. The parties to the conflict continued to entirely or heavily restrict access to besieged areas. In January, some 61,000 people (12 per cent) were assisted in besieged areas. The flow of commercial supplies through official routes remained largely blocked, leading to high prices for commodities reaching besieged areas through unofficial and irregular supply lines. Freedom of movement remained heavily restricted, though limited numbers were sporadically allowed to exit and re-enter some besieged areas.

42. In eastern Ghutah, Rif Dimashq, some 176,500 people remain besieged by Government forces in the following locations: Duma, Harasta, Arbin, Zamalka, Ain Tarma, Hammura, Jisrein, Kafr Batna, Saqba and Zabadin. No United Nations assistance was provided in these areas during the reporting period. Meanwhile, the Unified Medical Office for Douma announced the suspension of the dialysis services for patients suffering renal failure in eastern Ghutah owing to the lack of supplies for haemodialysis. Reportedly, two patients died of renal failure during the reporting period. On 13 February, SARC delivered 5,400 infant formula milk cans, 2,000 insulin boxes, supplies for 250 dialysis sessions and medicines to Duma.

43. In Madaya (and Buqayn) in Rif Dimashq, some 42,000 people remain besieged by Government forces. Reports of severe malnutrition continue to be received. In Foah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate, some 12,500 people remain besieged by non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front. Joint United Nations/ICRC/SARC convoys delivered assistance sufficient for one month to Madaya, Foah and Kafraya on 11, 14 and 18 January as part of the Four Towns Agreement. After initially gaining access to Madaya, the United Nations and ICRC/SARC submitted repeated requests to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for clearance for safe and unimpeded access to return with additional supplies, training teams and technical experts to address the situation on the ground. Although some approvals

have been granted, including the entrance of SARC mobile clinics, approval for sustained and unfettered access remains pending. On 4 February, the United Nations and ICRC/SARC submitted a further request to the Syrian authorities for a convoy to the towns covered under the Four Towns Agreement.

44. In Zabadani in Rif Dimashq, some 700 people remain besieged by Government forces. On 18 January, assistance for 1,000 people was delivered to Zabadani.

45. In Daraya in Rif Dimashq, about 4,000 people remain besieged by Government forces. The United Nations has been unable to deliver assistance to Daraya since November 2012.

46. In Madimayet Elsham in Rif Dimashq, about 45,000 people remain besieged by Government forces. Living conditions are reportedly worsening, with reports of deaths due to severe malnutrition and lack of basic medical supplies. On 21 January, the United Nations received approval to deliver aid to the buffer zone between the last Government checkpoint and the entrance to the besieged town, but not inside the besieged area. On 8 February, the Syrian authorities reiterated that the United Nations had approval to deliver to the buffer zone, but not inside Madimayet. The United Nations has not accepted this because of the serious protection concerns arising with distribution in the buffer zone. On 3 February, a SARC convoy delivered aid to the areas surrounding Madimayet, and a limited amount of medical aid inside the besieged area. On 8 February, SARC delivered further aid to the areas immediately outside Madimayet.

47. In Yarmouk in Damascus, some 6,000 people are besieged by Government forces and non-State armed groups. All UNRWA operations in Yarmouk remained suspended in January. Reports indicate that there are no functioning medical facilities due to insufficient medical supplies and trained medical personnel. The United Nations last delivered assistance to the area in December 2015, when UNICEF delivered nutrition, health and winter clothing supplies via implementing partners. UNRWA was not permitted to conduct any missions to Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahm in January but it received blanket approval to resume regular programming in these areas early in February 2016 following an interruption of over six months. On 13 and 14 February, UNRWA distributed food supplies for 2,100 families in Yalda town, serving civilians residing in Yalda, Babila, Beit Sahm and Yarmouk. Other humanitarian organizations have been allowed to deliver assistance to these areas.

48. In the Government-controlled western neighbourhoods of Dayr al-Zawr city, some 200,000 people are besieged by ISIL. Some 3,200 families were displaced within the besieged part of the city during the reporting period following offensives by ISIL. The humanitarian situation in the besieged areas continues to deteriorate sharply, with shortages of food and medical care, and severe malnutrition reported during the reporting period. The planned United Nations air bridge — approved in principle by the Syrian authorities — remains unfeasible at the current time owing to the airport's proximity to the front lines. The Russian Federation confirmed that it had airdropped relief supplies to Dayr al-Zawr on several occasions during the reporting period.

Free passage of medical supplies, personnel and equipment

49. United Nations and health partners received reports — which are in the process of being verified by the United Nations and partner organizations — of 13 attacks on medical facilities in January. Multiple attacks on medical facilities in February have already been reported. For example, on 15 February, UNICEF received reports of attacks against four medical facilities in February, two of which were in Azaz, Aleppo and two in Idlib.

50. Physicians for Human Rights released its report in January on attacks on medical facilities in 2015. A total of 112 attacks on medical facilities were documented from January through November 2015, making it the worst year on record for attacks on medical facilities, surpassing the 89 attacks in 2012. In total, Physicians for Human Rights has documented 336 attacks on 240 separate medical facilities between March 2011 and November 2015. According to Physicians for Human Rights, Syrian Government and Russian forces are responsible for over 90 per cent of these attacks.

51. WHO and its implementing partners delivered over 110,000 treatments through cross-line operations in Aleppo, Idlib, Rif Dimashq, and Homs governorates in January. During the reporting period, WHO submitted 15 requests to the Government of Syria to send medicines and medical supplies to hard-to-reach and besieged locations in nine governorates targeting over 2.5 million people. The majority of these requests are pending. The Syrian authorities recently approved a request to send medicines and medical supplies to Duma in Rif Dimashq. On 4 February, forces of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic removed medical kits from an inter-agency convoy to Al Wa'er.

52. The restricted access for medical aid to reach populations in need owing to active conflict and constraints imposed by the parties to the conflict continues to lead to loss of life and lack of life-saving medical assistance. The inhibition of delivery of essential medicines, medical supplies and equipment, as well as damage to many health facilities, particularly to hard-to-reach, besieged and non-State armed opposition group-controlled areas continues to lead to severe gaps in service delivery.

Safety and security of staff and premises

53. On 3 February 2016, three SARC volunteers were killed and one seriously injured while distributing bread in Aleppo governorate.

54. One staff member of an international non-governmental organization was killed and another injured by an improvised explosive device by unknown actors in Idlib on 25 January 2016.

55. A total of 34 United Nations staff members, 30 of whom are UNRWA area staff, 1 from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1 from UNICEF; 1 from UNHCR/United Nations Office for Project Services; and 1 from OCHA continue to be detained or missing. Five UNRWA staff members were released in 2015 and one released recently. The total number of humanitarian workers killed in the conflict since March 2011 is 85. This includes 17 staff members of the United Nations, 51 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, 8 volunteers and staff members of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and 9 staff

members of international non-governmental organizations. Of the 85, 19 have been killed since 1 January 2015.

III. Observations

56. As this conflict enters its sixth year, targeted and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, residential areas and civilian infrastructure have continued unabated and with near complete impunity. Since the start of the year, thousands of civilians have been killed, injured or displaced by the ongoing violence and the parties' disregard for the basic tenets of international humanitarian law. **Even as the United Nations talks commenced in Geneva at the start of February, I was shocked by the scenes of thousands of people fleeing for their lives from the unrelenting aerial bombardment in Aleppo governorate.** There can be no justification or defence, for continuously failing to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. Such attacks are unacceptable and unlawful and I call on the parties to immediately halt all actions that can result in civilian loss of life or damage to essential infrastructure.

57. The recent report published by the independent international commission of inquiry on deaths in detention in Syria is another stark and gruesome reminder that violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law continue to be perpetrated on a daily basis by all parties to the conflict. Detainees held by the Government were beaten to death, or died as a result of injuries sustained as a result of torture. Others perished as a consequence of inhuman living conditions. Non-State armed opposition groups and listed terrorist groups took individuals hostage and subjected detainees to serious abuses, including torture and summary executions. Such actions are reprehensible and may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. There must be accountability for these and other crimes.

58. I am extremely concerned about the incredibly dire situation facing the 486,700 people living in horrific conditions under siege in Syria. The continued reports of high levels of malnutrition and numbers of death due to lack of basic medical care emanating from besieged areas are shocking and cause for deep concern. The main responsibility for this immense suffering lies with the party imposing a siege. It is, however, shared by those who put civilians in harm's way by using them as shields for military activities or by those who take advantage of their suffering by taking bribes or selling food at exorbitant prices. Persons protected under international humanitarian law, particularly civilians and the wounded and sick, must be allowed to leave besieged areas, should they wish to do so. I remind all parties that the deliberate starvation of civilians as a method of warfare constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law and could amount to a war crime.

59. Despite their international legal obligations and the demands of the Security Council, all parties to the conflict continue to obstruct humanitarian assistance to those most in need and to withhold consent for operations in an arbitrary manner. Notwithstanding the valiant efforts of humanitarian organizations and staff that continue to assist millions of people, millions more are still left with no or insufficient access as a result. I call on the parties and those Member States with influence on them to urgently and without any hesitation or dilution take all necessary steps to bring sustained access throughout the country, particularly in besieged or hard-to-reach areas. The United Nations remains committed and ready

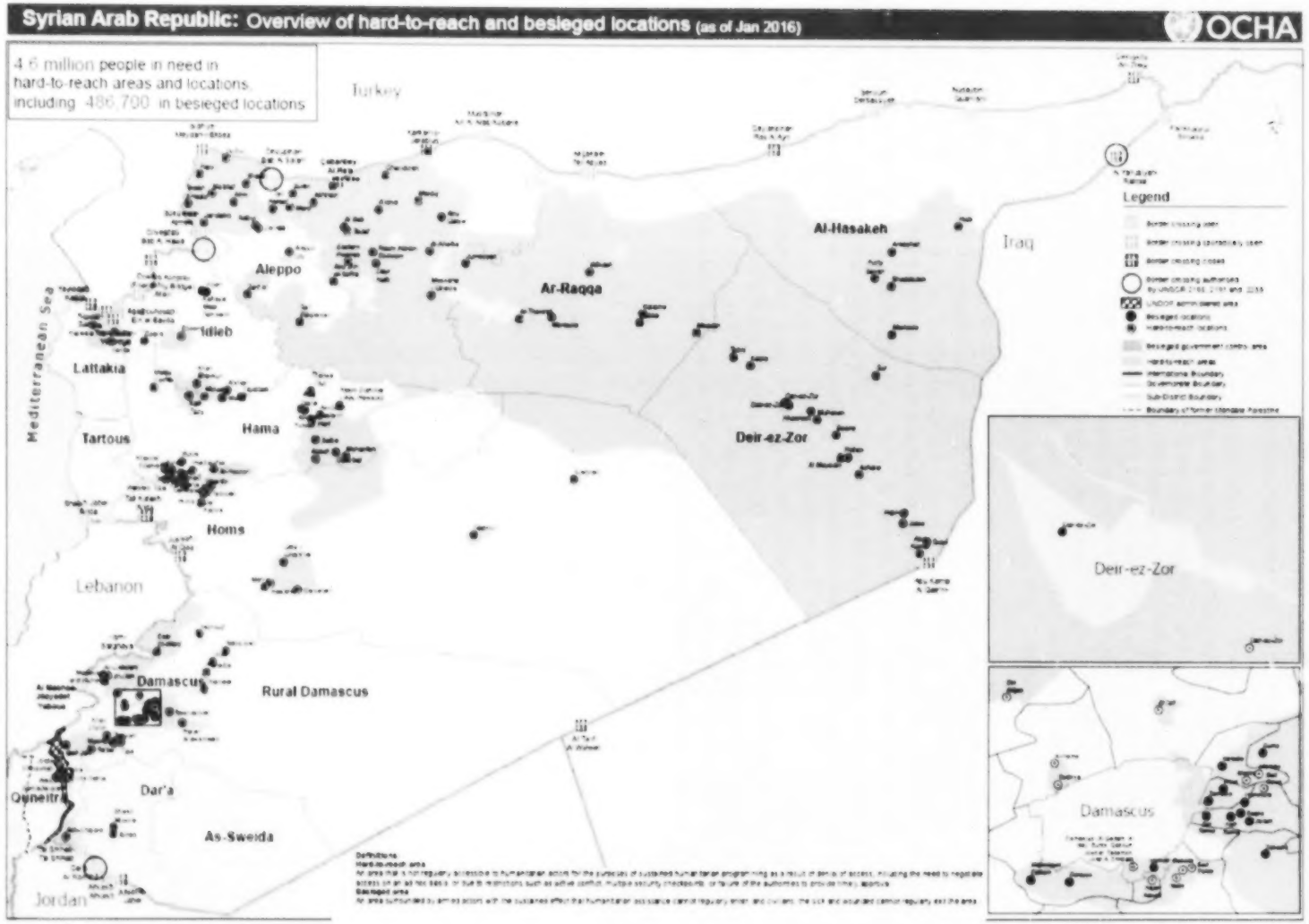
to deliver aid and protection for civilians, whoever and wherever they are, based on need and vulnerability and not on political considerations.

60. On 29 January, my Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, commenced intra-Syrian talks in Geneva between representatives of the Syrian Government and the High Negotiations Committee. Consultations also took place with women, civil society groups and other national stakeholders. On 3 February, my Special Envoy announced he was to recess talks as of 5 February because of unresolved procedural matters and the dramatically deteriorating humanitarian situation on the ground. However, the fact that all relevant Syrian actors did come to Geneva ready to discuss the end of the conflict and the future of their country, is in itself positive and should be supported. I look forward to the resumption of the intra-Syrian talks.

61. I welcome the sustained momentum and resolve to put an end to the Syrian conflict demonstrated by the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), whose ministers gathered in Munich on 11-12 February. I support their agreement to establish two task forces to ensure that all in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria are assured sustained access, as well as to implement a nationwide cessation of hostilities, in parallel with steps towards a political transition process. The United Nations shall do its utmost to support the implementation of the agreements reached by the ISSG as part of the implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) in all its aspects. The Syrian conflict has long gone beyond the abilities of the Syrians themselves to end it. The time has come for the international community to put their differences aside, for all parties to act with restraint and redouble efforts towards a political solution, lest the world is prepared to deal with the repercussions of this war inside Syria and far beyond.

Annex

Maps


Syrian Arab Republic: Overview of hard-to-reach and besieged locations (as of Jan 2016)
OCHA
4.6 million people in need in hard-to-reach areas and locations, including 486,700 in besieged locations
Turkey
Iraq
Lebanon
Jordan
Mediterranean Sea
Aleppo
Idleb
Lattakia
Tartous
Hama
Homs
Ar-Raqqa
Al-Hasakeh
Deir-ez-Zor
Damascus
Rural Damascus
Dar'a
As-Sweida
Quneitra
Legend
Deir-ez-Zor
Damascus

Syrian Arab Republic: United Nations cross-border operations under UNSC resolutions 2165/2191/2258 (July 2014 to January 2016) OCHA

UN Security Council Resolution 2165/2191/2258

Through the unanimous adoption of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) until 10 January 2017, the UN Security Council has authorized UN agencies and their partners to use routes across conflict lines and the border crossings at Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha, to deliver humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, to people in need in Syria. The government of Syria is notified in advance of each shipment and a UN monitoring mechanism has been established to oversee loading in neighboring countries and confirm the humanitarian nature of consignments.

Sector Classifications

Food: food baskets
NFIs: dignity kits, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mattresses, winterization kits, tarpaulins
WASH: basic water kits for families, water purification tablets, hygiene kits for families and babies, sanitary napkins, diapers
Health: emergency health kits, surgical kits, reproductive health kits, midwifery kits, medical consumables
Education: recreational kits

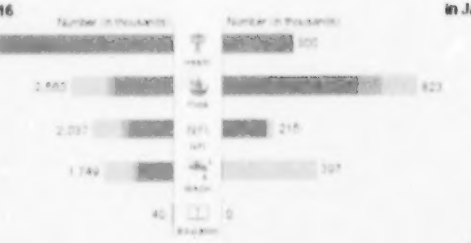
Number of Beneficiaries Assisted by the UN and its partners

Since 14 July 2014 to January 2016

256 Convoys 7 Agencies

Trucks 6,046

391 Bab Al-Hawa 483 Bab Al-Salam Ramtha



in January 2016

6 Agencies 16 Convoys

Trucks 533

412 Bab Al-Hawa 63 Bab Al-Salam Ramtha

Number of beneficiaries per month per sector

Number of trucks per month per crossing point

*Number of beneficiaries increased by 336,927 due to the delivery of food on rigid trucks. This figure represents planned beneficiaries in catchment areas and does not represent the actual number of individuals receiving assistance in these areas.

For feedback contact: Regional Office for the Syria Crisis (syriasitrep@un.org) Creation date: 4 February 2016